

## **Can a Moment Last Forever? by Punzie the Platypus**

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**Summary:** Mid?-S3. The night before the Byerses move, Jonathan and Nancy share a moment. Features lots of comforting kisses, an old record player, and a house full of memories.

## Can a Moment Last Forever?

*Soli Deo gloria*

**DISCLAIMER: I do NOT own Stranger Things. Or Islands in the Stream by Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers.**

I just had this entire fic playing out in my head and wanted to write it out.

Nancy had packed up something like a dozen moving boxes that day, so why was it the last one of the night that caused her to burst into tears?

She squeezed her eyes shut; her hand applying the tape to wield the two flaps of cardboard on top stopped to shake; the hand-written PHOTO ALBUMS + BOOKS on the side was written in shaky black marker.

Jonathan looked up from the dishes he was gently wrapping in kitchen towels; he hurriedly put down the bowl he'd been handling like a newborn baby and hurried to Nancy. Her holed jeans wore against the carpet as he knelt beside her. "Hey, hey," he said quietly, rubbing her arm. He kissed the top of her head as his eyes looked at the fixed hole in the living room's front wall. He wanted to memorize that carefully repaired wallpaper; he wanted to memorize the smell of her hair.

"It feels real," Nancy finally murmured, a hiccup in her silent sobs. "It didn't feel real until now."

Tomorrow, they'd cram the lives of the Byerses into the moving van. They'd share final goodbyes. And then he'd leave, forever.

"I know," Jonathan said, his voice measured. If he thought about it anymore, he'd be crying, too.

He and his mom and his brother and his girlfriend and El had spent all day packing up. A quiet sobriety filled the air all day. Mike showed up in the afternoon and he and El walked through the

junkyard. Now the girl, her big eyes haunted, slept against his mother's shoulder on the couch.

The living room seemed bare, stripped of Jonathan's childhood. All the furniture left was the sofa, the coffee table, and the TV. His mom sat on the couch, her head lolled; Will slept under one arm while her head leaned against El flanking her other side. They were quiet all day, but Jonathan felt their silence now that he and Nancy were the only ones awake late into the night.

The silence was palpable—you could reach out and touch it. He could distinguish every hitch in Nancy's lungs and every breath shuddering through her mouth and nose.

They shared so much together. All that trauma, their small town America's deep dark secrets escaping from the closet they lurked in, and then small moments. Their carpooling to work as he ignored the speed limit and caught Nancy applying lipstick in her cracked compact mirror out of the corner of his eye. When she stayed for dinner and helped him dry the dishes with a damp towel while he flicked water from the running faucet at her. The smell of flowers caught on all the warm and dumpy sweaters she wore to school in the fall.

And tomorrow it would all end.

"I just . . ." Nancy inhaled. "Of all the things we've seen, the things we've faced—" She met his serious face with those eyes, "This is the scariest."

Jonathan's fingers slipped under her hand. He brought her palm up to his lips and pressed a reassuring kiss against her scar. He lingered a second before meeting her eyes and slipping her hand across the back of his neck. "Then we'll get through it. We, you and I," he breathed, "we can get through *anything*."

They were words he believed. He believed in them wholeheartedly, so that was enough to convince Nancy. It was just a momentary slip of emotion. If she lifted her head, she could keep above water. Her fingertips dug into his skin, and her lips perked in a tiny smile. "Yeah, we can," she said softly.

Jonathan leaned forward and pressed a kiss against her cheek; a curl of two of hers was caught between him and her.

When he stood up, he grabbed blindly by his side for the coffee table, but instead of the table, he hit the record player. He jostled it, reconfiguring his hands and his weight as he stood up. The old record left in it slowly creaked to life.

It was a familiar song. Jonathan recognized it instantly. It was the song his mother played for weeks and weeks following Bob's gruesome death. Apparently, it was their song.

It was a sad song for his mom, but it was also just a song for lovers.

Jonathan looked down at Nancy as Kenny Rogers's voice filled the living room. Nancy smiled genuinely and let him pull her up. She laced her arms around his thin chest and breathed him in as her cheek sank against his sweater. His fingers threaded through her hair as his arms held her close against him. They swayed back and forth, closing their eyes, as the song hit the chorus. The song said exactly what they thought about each other.

Bob Newby was just one of the memories this house held. It held memories of two brothers, together against the world. Of a mother who would go down fighting for both of them. It held a lot.

By the song's end, Jonathan thought that Bob's music taste wasn't as bad as he'd thought.

Nancy sighed and said, her eyes shining, "Another moment."

"One of many," Jonathan said.

What neither of them wanted to say was, "One of the last."

I have so many questions about the end of S3. Where did the Byerses and Eleven go? Did Joyce get a new job? Is Jonathan going to college? Are he and Nancy staying in a relationship? What about Mileven? I HAVE QUESTIONS.

Thanks for reading! Review?